

The Fall of Dratheus V

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Fire Team Phoenix

0900, Six, ONI Research Facility- Omicron

The attack let alone the fall was what caught us by surprise. One second; drills as usual, and the next, the Covenant are swarming all major points of the planet.

We were deployed to the southeast corner of the landmass that the colony was settled on. Five of us, Dash, Spider, Brax, Jones, and I, They all called me Six. They didn't call me Six because of the position on the squad roster (we lost Sam on Harvest), it was because of my armor. Every piece of it was Mark VI. It was old fashioned, but extremely reliable.

When we arrived at our post, a research facility on the outskirts of an older town. Marines and ODS units were already beginning to build fortifications.

"Word from command says the Covies are headed straight for us," a marine relayed to Dash, our squad leader.

"Well then," Dash began, "Let's get in their way."

We entered formation as our team of five and entered the outer ring of the compound and fortifications where there were Wolverine AA tanks on station as well as an arsenal left exclusively for us. We all took up our usual: Dash with a DMR and his energy sword he stole off of a dead elite general's body, Spider with his shotgun and an

overshield armor ability, Brax with an MAB5 Assault Rifle and a magnum, Jones with a BR and a plasma pistol (they tended to come in handy), and I with my two SMGs and a drop shield. I volunteered to carry out AT which was one Spartan Laser with four shots.

"Alright team, we have one objective for us to complete today, and that is, to kill every single Covie bastard we see," Dash tried to say calmly but grew more angry and energetic about halfway through his orders. We took up our positions spread out along the top of the compound walls alongside marines and ODSTs alike. The next hour and a half was the most silent I've ever heard a war zone.

1100, Six, ONI Research Facility- Omicron

It seemed like days waiting for the first Covenant to come into view, but when they did, there were a few rallying cheers amongst the soldiers as they came into range of our snipers. Grunts and elites alike fell from the ODSTs' expertly placed rounds. When they came to close for sniper fire, the machine gun emplacements mopped up the stragglers.

"This is too easy," Spider said excitedly through COMs.

Just as he had finished saying that our soldiers began to scatter when a marine officer shouted "INCOMING!" as Covenant artillery fire broke a hole large enough to fit a pelican through in our wall.

"Way to go, Jackass," Brax said sarcastically, "Now Six and I are going to have to go out there and have some fun."

Brax and I looked at each other, put our helmets on, and jumped from the 35 foot wall to the ground. Our shields absorbed the fall as we hit, but we were surrounded by a swarm of grunts and elites. I had to throw down a drop shield or we would have been done for.

"When the shield breaks, Let 'em have it," I said a little too calmly into my mic as we dared every enemy unit to enter our bubble.

The shield broke and we exploded out of our position spraying lead in every direction until only a few fleeing grunts remained. We seemed pretty confident holding off the next few waves until we saw what was coming for us next. Two hunters flanked by a group of elite minors were slowly marching towards Brax and me.

"You two might want to come back up here pretty soon, Jones said finally breaking his silence.

"Nah," Brax started, "I think we have this under control. What do you think, Six?"

"We can take the hunters," I said, "Just keep those elites off our backs. Relay that to the snipers up top."

We were able to reload our weapons as the hunters broke into a full-out sprint towards the gap in the wall. A barrage of sniper fire wiped out the three elites on one side. Now only three elites and two hunters left. Great. I gave Brax the thumbs up and I ran to meet the first hunter who was surprised to see an enemy running towards it, hesitated. _Perfect, _I thought _now I can just climb onto his back and plant a grenade in his wormy back._ As I climbed around to the

big guy's back, big guy number two noticed what was happening and began lumbering towards me. Too late! The grenade was placed and I used the bag of worms as a springboard off of himself.

I landed and rolled just in time to see the hunter's torso explode sending orange goop everywhere, his two legs leaned and fell shortly after.

"Alright, MY turn," Brax said as he ran to the second hunter.

Something was off. This hunter was ready for him and Brax didn't notice as the 800 pound gorilla of an opponent sent Brax flying unconscious off of his shielded arm.

1603, Brax, Ruins of ONI Research Facility- Omicron

I woke up under a pile of demolished wall to the sounds of gunfire and the sizzling of plasma scorch marks on metal.

"Guys," Six called, Brax is up!"

"Don't move, Brax! We got another wraith incoming," Jones called from a distance.

I wondered why they were yelling until I realized our COMs were jammed. We were fighting an uphill battle and we only had minutes until we wouldn't be able to hold the lab. I heard the charging of a Spartan laser and then a loud FWOOSH.

"Good effect on target, Spider" was all I heard until I drifted out of consciousness again. I would wake up occasionally to the feeling of being dragged backwards by a fellow Spartan, or trying to get up and fight. When I became able to stay awake, my HUD told me my back was broken in 3 places and I was in need of an amputation of my badly burnt right arm. I was later told that the force of an incoming hunter blast tore all the armor off of my right arm and shoulder and the shields are what kept myself in one piece.

I reached for my trusty magnum sidearm and took aim at the advancing Covenant. I fired 3 shots and killed two grunts and a jackal before the combat medic took the weapon from me and knocked me out for good this time.

1200, Spider, ONI Research Facility- Omicron

It wasn't long after I heard and felt a sickening thud against the wall of the lab that I heard what confirmed my suspicion.

"BRAX IS DOWN! SPARTAN DOWN!"

I loaded my shotgun and leapt off of the wall alongside Jones and Dash as we ran towards Six to level the playing field.

"That second hunter is still up," a marine said over the COMs channel a little too worriedly.

As if the two legged tank heard us, he turned and began charging his enhanced fuel rod cannon and aimed at our position. We ran into the cover of a crashed hornet. One engine was stuck, but still trying to

keep the bird in the air.

I didn't notice what the hunter was aiming for before it was too late. It was going to finish Brax off for good. I watched the impact of the blob of explosive and saw what I thought was the last of my friend and squad mate disappear under a pile of concrete barrier and a scrapped warthog. Without any communication between the four of us, Six and Jones bolted to the pile of rubble while Dash and I made for the hunter.

"Ill distract it while you kill that son of a bitch," Dash said in his almost monotone combat voice as he drew his energy sword and swiped at the 20 foot beast as I snuck around it's back to almost tear it in half with my shotgun. The blast pushed the hunter about 7 feet forwards and then falling.

Alright, now we call for evac. _This is too close for comfort_.

1630, Dash, UNSC Battle Cruiser Indiana

Brax was messed up bad. We pulled him off the evac pelican and all we heard from him were ramblings of either random covenant chatter or groans of "Not this wayâ€|. Not today." The medics said that it was going to be a 7 hour Surgery. 3 hours for his back and 4 hours for a new right arm.

"Jesus," Jones said almost under his breath, "I hope Brax is alright."

"He's a tough one," Six reassured him, "there's no way he won't be."

2 hours into the procedure, I was called to the ops center to debrief.

A debrief 2 hours before we were leaving again to save this god forsaken planet. How smart is that to make an already angry 350 Lb. (with armor) super soldier even angrier?

After our debrief and re-briefing, we were sent after another Spartan planet side.

0200, Jones, Forest of Whispers

The one good thing about the forests on Dratheus V is the fact that none of the predators are large enough to even be a bother to human activity. They also create good cover noise to move around in. 4 Spartans, Six, Dash, Spider, and I alongside an elite squad of ODSTs. Dash was given a modified active camouflage module that would cloak anybody in a 30 foot radius giving off the correct infrared signal. Six had some experimental forerunner tech replacing his drop shield. He didn't like it at first, but orders from ONI are final.

"Small grunt and elite patrol having a snooze," one of the ODSTs said.

There were 4 grunts and 1 elite. Six swept the elite's legs and I cut his throat with my knife. The helljumpers mopped up the grunts with SOCOM pistols. We knew when we were close by the heavier covenant

presence was.

"Can't believe we've made it this far," Dash said as he knocked on a nearby tree.

An ODSST piped up, "what if it's a tr"- His statement was cut short by the noticing of an energy sword through his back. The covenant had known their position all along.

"We need to move. NOW," screamed Spider as he blasted the spec-ops elite off of his feet. Six picked the dead trooper up and carried him over his shoulder while wielding a magnum. We took cover behind a group of thick trees, but not before almost everyone, including myself and Six, were hit badly. I had a needle in my shoulder and six had his hand half removed by a sword slice. Plasma burns were not uncommon.

"Try the thing ONI gave you," I shouted to Six.

We were going to die here. Why not try it.

"Alright, here it goes," replied Six.

His armor lights flickered to life as he stood up and locked up a stance as though he was trying to shed his own skin. A burst of Green light formed a translucent sphere around us and I felt a strange feeling as the needle in my arm disintegrated.

My wound didn't exist. Plasma burns were disappearing off of us and Six's had was reattached to his arm.

Six said happily, "Well! Why isn't this a surprise?"

Completely healed, we leapt out of our cover and rushed the incoming covenant attackers and drove them back to the weapons depot they were using as a command post. We just finished mopping up the covenant when out of nowhere a group of brutes led by a chieftain charged us. The chieftain was on top of dash as we killed the other brutes effortlessly. Dash had compromised the brute's armor when we heard the solid CHUUN of a magnum. A Spartan walked out from behind a tree and said, "Commander Sarah Palmer of the UNSC Infinity." We managed to tell her our squad title, ship, and Spartan names before the covenant began to rip apart the planet.

0030, Brax, UNSC Indiana recovery ward

I was awake. That was for sure. My back was fixed using some kind of forerunner regeneration field technology. I wasn't that lucky with my arm. Where flesh and bone used to be, there was a robotic replacement limb already outfitted with a new right hand Scout type shoulder plate and wrist guard.

"Please do not move, sir," a nurse said from behind a tablet, "I am finishing final diagnostics on your arm.

She typed a few words and asked me to move my right arm. I knew it was moving because I saw it move. But I didn't feel my fingers or arm in general.

"Will this arm give me feeling," I asked.

"Sadly, it will not," the nurse replied putting the tablet back in its cubby at the foot of my bed.

Okay. Time to get to the armor bay. I pushed past nurses and doctors alike trying to get to the armory. I eventually got there but when I did a weapons expert on board told me I should enter the simulation rooms to get used to my new arm and become accurate again.

"Here we go."

I stepped into the first room and was greeted by the simulated Covenant plasma fire. I easily rolled into cover and climbed on top of a small building. I was already becoming used to my appendage.

0430, Six, Django Highway intercontinental overpass

Before I get to why we were on the bridge assisting in a planet wide evacuation, let me tell you briefly how the planet began to literally fall apart. A small moon orbiting Dratheus V housed an old forerunner facility made for scuttling the planet when needed. The Covenant activated this device and in consequence, the world began to end.

"More ghosts," Spider yelled as he jumped off the back of the elephant closest to us and pulled out his rocket launcher.

"This convoy cannot fall, Spartans," Commander Palmer shouted to us as she brought the turret on the elephant around to face the rear.

Another group of ghosts down. The third in 20 minutes. Pelicans were waiting on the overpass 25 miles ahead to load us up and leave. The planet was doomed. Covenant were also trying to leave but tried to take us down with them.

"U-N-S-C Indiana to fire team Phoenix. We have entered atmosphere due to a corvette class ship approaching your current area of operation. Brace for the firing of MAC rounds."

That was the best thing to happen to us all day. Cheers from marines and refugees alike could be heard over the gunfire and explosions. Sure enough the familiar shape of home came drifting closer and closer until the letters UNSC INDIANA were right next to the bridge.

A side hangar bay door opened and a single pelican flew out with a figure standing on the boarding ramp. Our cyborg jumped off the pelican before it could land and ran up to us. Brax saluted with his new right arm and turned around to fire at the tailing Covenant.

"We are leaving soon, guys," he told us as he fired into the crowds of arm thieves, "The Indiana can't take much more of this and we move with the ship. We leave in 4 hours, the same time evac pelicans arrive for the survivors and soldiers."

"We need to focus on making it to friendly fortifications on the other side of the bridge." Dash explained to Brax, "Then, we take our troops and these civvies and get off this collapsing death trap."

"No pressure but none of us can afford to be out of action on this one." I said to Brax

It was surprisingly quiet until the purple mass that was the Covenant ship grew a lot closer. We were given the advisory to brace ourselves. The Indiana aligned itself, and fired its massive MAC railgun at the corvette.

"Shot is a confirmed hit, Indiana," Dash relayed to command on board the ship.

We had an easy time getting to our friendly fortifications across the bridge.

"Palmer to fire team phoenix. I can handle the rest of this evac from here. I could use a team like you back on Infinity."

We boarded a pelican with a group of civilians and took off towards the Indiana. We laughed a little bit when a small child asked if we were robots while pointing to Brax's arm. We took off our helmets and felt the final breezes of air from this planet as we glided home. When we arrived at what we thought was home, our squad was relocated to the UNSC Infinity until further notice. We cleaned out our bunks and flew to our new base of operations.

If only we knew of the events to come. We all would have stayed on the Indiana.

End
file.